

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH
AND THE JAVITS-WAGNER-O'DAY PROGRAM

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and an appropriate time to celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program. This year's theme is "JWOD Works for America". Created in 1938, this unique Federal procurement program has provided employment to thousands of individuals with severe disabilities, enabling them to lead more productive and independent lives. The JWOD Program encompasses all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Under the JWOD program, supplies and services purchased by DOE and other Federal agencies generate jobs for nearly 48,000 Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities at more than 600 community-based nonprofit agencies across the country. A goal of creating 50,000 jobs has been established.

The JWOD Program is the largest single source of employment for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities in the United States. Total sales under the JWOD Program exceed \$1 billion annually. Employment opportunities made possible through the JWOD Program equip tens of thousands of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities with the job skills and training necessary to earn equitable wages, benefits and greater independence. The JWOD Program, a priority source of supply, collaborates with its Federal customers to satisfy their needs with quality products and services at fair market prices. People who are blind or have other severe disabilities are a reliable workforce, fulfill a wide array of product and service needs for Federal customers, and are capable of meeting or exceeding industry quality standards. As we celebrate this success, there remains a critical need for the Program as 70 percent of people with severe disabilities, including blindness, remain unemployed or underemployed.

President Bush has said, "All of our citizens should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and freedom. Every October, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month, to recognize the talents, skills, and dedication of disabled Americans who are a vital part of our workforce." Not only are people who are blind or have other severe disabilities a vital part of the American workforce, but under the JWOD Program they are also essential suppliers of SKILCRAFT and other JWOD products and services to the Federal Government and U.S. Armed Forces.

The JWOD Program, as part of the National Disability Employment Awareness Month, is intended to raise awareness and to recognize the crucial role played by Federal personnel, whose purchases of JWOD items contribute to the Program's success. This is an ideal time for DOE personnel to revisit their procurement needs and renew their interest in supporting the JWOD Program. This Program provides Federal personnel with quality supplies and services, on time, at reasonable prices.

Please learn more about this program at www.jwod.gov. The DOE liaison to the JWOD Program is Jeffrey Rubenstein, MA-641, (202) 287-1516.

